

## Preparing Engaged Citizens: Integrating Civic Learning in General Education

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## General Education at UW Oshkosh | **Our Transformation**

**OLD:** No reform since the 1970s  
Lots of artifacts from other eras  
Over 700 classes to choose from  
Little coherence  
Essential Learning Outcomes... *what?*

**NEW:** Complete overhaul  
Courses connected and intentional  
New guidelines for course inclusion  
New governance structures  
Tied to [Essential Learning Outcomes](#)

## USP Guiding Principles

- Incorporation of **High-Impact Practices** (HIPs)
- **Inclusive excellence**
- Making the case for **liberal arts education**
- **Reflection** as a tool for learning
- Assessment evidence via **ePortfolio**
- **Relationships** as the basis for success
- **No increase** in time to degree

## Form Follows Function: Building the USP

### **Explore: Breadth and Opportunity**

General education requirements in lab science, math, humanities, social sciences, and fine/performing arts

### **Quest I : First-Year Experience**

Small, paired classes, Peer Mentors, introduction to college life and expectations, help finding resources

### **Quest II : Problem-Solving**

Paired classes, ethical dilemmas via case studies

### **Quest III : Community Experience**

Significant engagement with Community Partners and Alumni Mentors

### **Connect: Synthesis**

Advanced composition, USP's "capstone"

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## Our Campus: Bringing the Community IN

**UW Oshkosh:** 13,000 students, mostly undergraduate

**First-Year Students:** approximately 1,600 each year, many first-generation

**UW System:** third largest in system of 26 campuses (4- and 2-year)

**The Wisconsin Idea:** the borders of the university are the borders of the state





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## Our Community: Extending the University OUT

**Oshkosh, Wisconsin:** population ~66,000

**Wisconsin's "Event City":** EAA Airventure, Rock USA, Country USA, Lifest, etc.

**Major Employers:** Oshkosh Truck, EAA, UW Oshkosh

**Demographics:** 91% white, 3% African American, 3% Asian

## Quest III: Difficult, But Worth It

*Required for every sophomore student (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> semester)*

**Inspiration:** Musil's [Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes](#)  
[Portland State University's Senior Capstone](#) courses

**Features:** Liberal Education: *why* are we doing this?  
Students as contributors, not passive receivers  
Community Partners  
Alumni Mentors  
Community Experiences, not “volunteer hours”  
The four “Rs” (Quest III Checklist; *handout*)  
Student conduct and handbook  
Staff member dedicated to these courses *only*  
Civic Engagement Student Interns (x2)  
Study abroad options for Quest III



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**ABOVE:** Art 236: Experience Mapping  
(Oshkosh Senior Center)

**RIGHT:** Anthropology 225: Celebrating  
Culture Through the Arts (Oshkosh Area  
School District; Lighted Schoolhouse)





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**Interdisciplinary Studies 224:**  
Conflict & Memorial (UW Oshkosh  
Veterans Center)



**Business 275:** Marketing & Sustainability  
(Growing Oshkosh)

## Quest III: Why It's Worth It

### For the Community

Building community relationships

Responding to employer demands (hands-on experience, problem-solving, etc.)

University woven into the community fabric

### For the Students

Hands-on experience directly related to coursework

Networking with community members

Resume-building

Unique experience they might never otherwise have (*farming example*)

### For Instructors

Off-campus and out in the community

Extending expertise to new (local) areas

Develop new courses

## Challenges & Opportunities

### Community Partners

Finding new (and/or consistent) Community Partners  
Ensuring quality Community Experience projects for students

### Students in Quest III

Student understanding of value of Quest III  
Ensuring connections between projects and coursework  
Scheduling difficulties (for classes *and* time for projects)

### Quest III Instructors

Administrative tasks associated with Quest III  
Assessment of out-of-classroom experiences  
Finding a role for Alumni Mentors



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## Find Us!

[www.uwosh.edu/usp](http://www.uwosh.edu/usp)

([New site](#) goes live in a few weeks!)

**Email:** [usp@uwosh.edu](mailto:usp@uwosh.edu)

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*Pollock House, home of the USP*